

The Houston Financial Empowerment Center (HFEC): COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Houston Financial Empowerment Center (HFEC)?

The Houston Financial Empowerment Center (HFEC) is a partnership between the City of Houston, the Cities for Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund), and a local nonprofit partner, The Alliance, to provide free, professional one-on-one financial counseling as a public service. To find out more information about the HFEC, please visit www.houstontx.gov/fec/

How can a HFEC financial counselor help me?

The professionally trained and CFE Fund-certified financial counselors help clients better manage their money, improve their credit score, paydown debt, increase savings, establish and build credit, and provide access to safe and affordable banking products. The HFEC counselors can also help to create a customized plan to address student loans, buy a house, or start an emergency fund.

Is the HFEC operating during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, the HFEC is operating while following the Centers for Disease Control social distancing and telecommuting guidelines. The HFEC counselors are available to assist residents, especially those who recently experienced loss of employment or have been affected by business closures during the pandemic.

How are counseling sessions conducted?

After initial intake information gathering and explanation of HFEC services, clients are scheduled for a one-on-one session with a financial counselor. Sessions are scheduled to occur within one week or sooner after the initial contact by the client. All necessary documentation can be completed and submitted electronically without clients visiting the HFEC offices. You can meet with a counselor as many times as you want or need.

Counseling sessions are typically 30-60 minutes. While the City of Houston is not conducting public meetings through May 31, HFEC are conducted by telephone or using teleconferencing platforms like Zoom, Skype, WebEx, or Microsoft Teams depending upon the technology preference of the client.

What are the business hours?

The hours of operation are Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

How do I contact a counselor or schedule an appointment?

Please email the HFEC Program Manager Ana Gonzalez at agonzalez@thealliancetx.org or call the main number at (832) 393-1125. To book an online appointment, you can also select a counselor through Youcanbook.me by selecting one of the counselors below:

- Lydia Sims- <https://lydia-sims.youcanbook.me>
- Noemi Flores- <https://noemi-flores.youcanbook.me/>
- Marcus Hill- <https://marcusghill.youcanbook.me/>

The telephone contact number is monitored by a live HFEC staff member during business hours. Voice messages and emails are returned the same day, usually within an hour. Afterhours contacts are returned the next business day.